

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM & MASSCOMMUNICATION

4th SEMESTER HONOURS, CORE-10, UNIT-4

Media and Regulation; Regulatory Bodies

In this session we will discuss about the PCI, Press Council of India, one of the most important self regulatory body related to Indian media.

Media in India is mostly self-regulated. The existing bodies for regulation of media such as the Press Council of India which is a statutory body and the News Broadcasting Standards Authority, a self-regulatory organization, issue standards which are more in the nature of guidelines. The former Chairman of the Press Council of India, former Justice of the Supreme Court, Mr. M. Katju, has argued that television and radio need to be brought within the scope of the Press Council of India or a similar regulatory body.

Press Council of India (PCI) - The PCI was established under the PCI Act of 1978 for the purpose of preserving the freedom of the press and of maintaining and improving the standards of newspapers and news agencies in India.

The PCI consists of a chairman and 28 other members. The Chairman is selected by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and a member elected by the PCI. The members consist of members of the three Lok Sabha members, two members of the Rajya Sabha, six editors of newspapers, seven working journalists other than editors of newspapers, six persons in the business of managing newspapers, one person who is engaged in the business of managing news agencies, and three persons with special knowledge of public life.

Its functions - The functions of the PCI include among others

- (i) helping newspapers maintain their independence;
- (ii) build a code of conduct for journalists and news agencies;
- (iii) help maintain “high standards of public taste” and foster responsibility among citizens; and
- (iv) review developments likely to restrict flow of news.

Powers- The PCI has the power to receive complaints of violation of the journalistic ethics, or professional misconduct by an editor or journalist. The PCI is responsible for enquiring in to complaints received. It may summon witnesses and take evidence under oath, demand copies of public records to be submitted, even issue warnings and admonish the newspaper, news agency, editor or journalist. It can even require any newspaper to publish details of the inquiry. Decisions of the PCI are final and cannot be appealed before a court of law.

The limitations on the powers of the PCI- The powers of the PCI are restricted in two ways;

- (1) The PCI has limited powers of enforcing the guidelines issued. It cannot penalize newspapers, news agencies, editors and journalists for violation of the guidelines;
- (2) The PCI only overviews the functioning of press media. That is, it can enforce standards upon newspapers, journals, magazines and other forms of print media. It does not have the power to review the functioning of the electronic media like radio, television and internet media.

(Rest of the related material will be delivered in the next phase,
after taking online classes with the students.)

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